

Translating the *Roman Missal*: An Episcopal Reflection on the Process and the Product

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Lift Up Your Hearts: A Pastoral, Theological, and Historical Survey of the Third Typical Edition of The Roman Missal. Edited by Robert L. Tuzik. Chicago, Ill.: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011. viii + 182 pp. \$13.95 (paper).

The Roman Missal, Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition. Study Edition. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011. 1514 pp. \$34.95 (paper).

In October 2013, the Roman Catholic German Bishops' Conference tabled a request by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) to approve a new translation of the *Roman Missal*. Some say that the German bishops were waiting to act in concert with their Austrian colleagues, who had not yet reviewed the translation. The dominant view, however, is that the German bishops were rejecting the translation and planned never to consider it again.

During the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the bishops almost certainly would not have been allowed this autonomy. With Francis I as Pope, they might.

The bishops of English-speaking Roman Catholic groups were given the same charge years ago, but the outcome was markedly different. On Advent I, 2011—Advent I, 2012 in the Philippines—a new

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translation was imposed on the English-speaking world. The 2011 translation and a commentary upon it, edited by Robert Tuzik, can be understood only within the history of the translation of liturgical material into English since the Council. It is a history marked in its latter days by conflict, intrigue, and coercion.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was issued in December 1963: the first of the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Within months, Roman Catholic bishops seized its permission for “the use of the mother tongue” to “be extended” (36.2). The National Conference of Bishops of the United States (now the National Conference of Catholic Bishops) quickly issued an edition of the *Roman Missal* with the scriptural readings, along with antiphons drawn from the Bible, in English. Poetic material (Sequences, for example), congregational texts (the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*), and other compositions were also provided in English (but not the forms that would eventually roll instinctively off the tongues of English-speaking Roman Catholics).

In 1969, Paul VI issued a new edition of the *Roman Missal*, promulgated in 1970. This was the first *editio typica* (equivalent to the Standard Edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*) of the post-conciliar Missal. The 1970 decree of promulgation gave conferences of bishops “the responsibility to prepare editions in the vernaculars” to be approved by the Vatican lest heresy, for example, be inadvertently inscribed in the texts.

Even though the Vatican retained the right of veto, responsibility for translations belonged to the National Conferences of Bishops. In time, this was to change and Rome proscribed the bishops’ authority. In 2006, Bishop Maurice Taylor, of Galloway, Scotland, a key figure in the translation of the Latin Missal into English, objected: “Not only is this against the original statutes of [the English-language commission entrusted with translating the Missal] but it goes against the ecclesiology that was taught by Vatican II: collegiality, the authority of bishops (who are not merely Rome’s branch managers), subsidiarity. Much has been written in recent years of the increasing power which the Roman Curia is giving itself—and all this is a further example of the centralization of authority.”¹

¹ Maurice Taylor, *Being a Bishop in Scotland* (Blackrock: Columba, 2006), 137–138.

The translation commission to which Taylor refers existed before 1970 when the Missal of Paul VI was promulgated. The bishops from English-speaking nations had formed ICEL (the International Committee—later Commission—on English in the Liturgy) in 1963.² ICEL ensured uniformity across the English-speaking world and avoided the inefficiency of each nation convening its own body of translators.

The “Englishing” of the liturgy was not the beginning of liturgical renewal in the Roman Church, even if it was its most obvious manifestation. Since the late nineteenth century, the “liturgical movement” had been underway and had been the impetus for liturgical renewal in the larger Christian world.³ “Following the lead of the Roman Church, continental Protestants and Eastern Orthodox churches gradually recognized the importance of the liturgical movement and began to respond to it,” wrote Marion Hatchett. Yet he confessed, “Not until the 1930’s did the liturgical movement begin to have some effect on the Anglican Communion.”⁴ When it did, it had an incalculable impact on most, if not all, of the contemporary liturgical texts used by Anglicans.

This nearly universal liturgical renewal, coincident with the flourishing of the ecumenical movement, spurred many English-speaking churches to develop liturgical texts for use across denominational lines. A body of translators and authors—the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET)—including representatives of the Episcopal Church and the Roman Church, produced translations of commonly used liturgical texts: the *Sursum Corda*, for example, the Nicene Creed, and the *Magnificat*, at the same time as ICEL was translating Latin material into English. The texts drafted by ICET were incorporated by ICEL in Roman liturgical books.

The Episcopal Church also adopted the ICET texts in the 1979 Prayer Book, and other denominations included them as well. This commonality of texts facilitated members of diverse churches

² Keith F. Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence: The Living Language of Christian Worship* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 204–205.

³ A useful and concise exposition of the liturgical movement through the biographies of its key figures is provided by Robert Tuzik, the editor of the volume being reviewed here. Robert L. Tuzik, *How Firm a Foundation: Leaders of the Liturgical Movement*, vol. 2 (Chicago, Ill.: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990).

⁴ Marion J. Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper, 1995), 11.

participating actively in the liturgical assemblies of the others. It allowed also for the same service music to be used broadly. Richard Proulx's *Community Mass*, for example, was incorporated, not only in *The Hymnal 1982*, but also in Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and other denominational books.

ICEL and ICET had the same translation philosophy. Both produced translations "dynamically equivalent" to the texts in their original languages. A dynamically equivalent translation aims to capture the intention and produce the impact of a text without rendering a word-for-word equivalent. A word-for-word translation, by contrast, is said to be "formally equivalent" to the original. Translation software proves that a formally equivalent translation may not mean or do the same things as the original text.

From the start, critics noted the sometimes glaring errors and infelicities of ICEL's and ICET's dynamic equivalents. Most critiqued, not the philosophy, but the translators' failure to employ it effectively.

In 1975, the second edition of the *Roman Missal* of Paul VI appeared. It was so much like the first edition that it was little more than a ripple in the liturgical pond. For translators, it demanded almost nothing.

Then came the 1979 Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, which had a tone—a "register," as linguists call it—that was markedly different from the 1973 Roman translation. The processes by which the 1979 BCP and the 1973 English translation of the *Roman Missal* were created were divergent especially in this: Episcopalians used trial liturgies and incorporated feedback. Especially the experimental Green and Zebra Books have become iconic examples of Episcopal liturgical trial-use. The Roman Church had no equivalent processes or products. Not involving the "priesthood of all believers" in the creation of liturgical scripts has been said to have been contrary to the Roman Church's own articulated ecclesiology.⁵

ICEL did not imagine that the 1973 translation of the Missal and its translations of other liturgical texts were anything but provisional. A new translation of the burial materials, less extensive by far than the Missal, *The Order of Christian Funerals*, was released in 1989. It was translated and issued while, in the background, the same work was being done on the Missal. Because the funeral rite was so well

⁵ Nicholas Denysenko, "The Revision of the Roman Missal: An Orthodox Reflection," *Worship* 85 (2011): 306–329, esp. 328.

received, there was little doubt that the extensive work on the Missal would be approved. In eight segments as they were completed, ICEL began in 1983 to send the re-translated Missal to the bishops of English-speaking groups for review. Comments were gathered; changes were made. By 1998, the new translation of the second edition of the Missal was nearly ready to be published, but it never was.

In 2002, during the pontificate of John Paul II, the *Roman Missal* was issued in its third edition: an edition that contained a significant volume of material that was not in the previous two. This Latin material needed to be translated into English (and other vernaculars), but not only that material.

ICEL now faced a task that was quite different from what it had undertaken just after the Council and in the intervening years. Between the promulgation of the second and third editions a game-changing set of directives had been put into play. In 2001, John Paul II had issued the document *Liturgiam authenticam*, which renounced “dynamic equivalence” in favor of “formal equivalence.”⁶ The entire Missal, not just the additions, was to be translated according to the new rules.

Liturgiam authenticam directed that every word in the Latin *editio typica* had to be accounted for in translations. Even capitalizations had to correspond.⁷ Because of these demands, the 1998 proposed Missal was scrapped and a new English translation was prepared. In 2011, it replaced the 1973 ICEL translation.⁸ While it would seem that *Liturgiam authenticam* killed the 1998 Missal, it is more likely that the 1998 Missal was the reason *Liturgiam authenticam* was issued in the first place.

ICEL had critics, if not enemies. Some saw ICEL’s 1973 translation as a revisionist Trojan horse, not just a flawed attempt. The 1973 Missal, they insisted, was ICEL’s left-wing attempt to subtly mislead English-speaking Roman Catholics, and they warned that a new ICEL Missal would further erode the faith and good order of the church.

⁶ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam authenticam*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html.

⁷ *Liturgiam authenticam* §20 (concerning accounting for words and the maintenance of structure) and §33 (concerning capitalization).

⁸ For a concise timeline of the history of the new English translation, see Rita Ferrone, “Roman Missal Crisis: A Timeline,” *Commonweal*, June 30, 2011; <http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/roman-missal-crisis>.

Although an unofficial campaign against ICEL and some of the guiding principles behind the 1998 translation (such as the consistent use of gender-inclusive language for human beings) had long been underway, the ground finally shifted in 1998, the same year that the proposed Missal was completed. Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, conveying what he had learned during a recent trip to the Vatican, warned the bishops on ICEL that *Liturgiam authenticam* was coming. ICEL, as it had been functioning for almost fifty years, began to be dismantled, and the translation of the *Roman Missal* that had been vetted and approved by the bishops of English-language groups was discarded. The translation of liturgical texts would now be, not a process the Vatican would monitor, but a process the Vatican would direct. When then chair of ICEL, Bishop Denis Hurley of Durban, pushed back, “Cardinal George reacted strongly to Hurley. He felt he had been insulted.”⁹

Lift Up Your Hearts, the collection of essays edited by Robert Tuzik being reviewed here, concerns the ensuing process and the resulting 2011 *Roman Missal*.¹⁰ The preface is by Francis Cardinal George, Tuzik’s ordinary. In the preface, George explains his intervention at the 1998 meeting. “When Pope John Paul II named me a Cardinal on January 18, 1998, I was appointed to be a member of the CDWDS, which would eventually produce in 2001 the revised norms for translating *The Roman Missal* into the vernacular, *Liturgiam authenticam*, and be responsible for reviewing and amending the proposed translation prior to sending it to the Holy Father for approval.”¹¹ George not only wrote the preface to Tuzik’s book, but also gave it the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur*: respectively, attestations that nothing is contrary to the faith and moral teachings of the Roman Church (“nothing hinders”) and permission to publish it under the auspices of the Roman Church (“let it be printed”). George’s role

⁹ John Wilkins, “Lost in Translation: The Bishops, the Vatican and the English Liturgy,” *Commonweal*, November 28, 2005; <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/lost-translation-1>.

¹⁰ *The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*, Study Edition (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011).

¹¹ Francis Cardinal George, “Preface,” in *Lift Up Your Hearts*, ed. Robert L. Tuzik (Chicago, Ill.: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011), v.

in the production of this book provides the context in which Tuzik's volume must be read. It is essentially an *apologia*.

Still, it provides a great deal of useful information. Monsignor Andrew Wadsworth, now the Executive Director of ICEL, fills in gaps in the history. He speaks favorably of some of the work of the 1973 translators, quoting such Roman Catholic liturgical movement luminaries as Frederick McManus and Dom Aelred Tegels, who applauded the early efforts. At the same time, Wadsworth makes a number of points that reveal a Roman Catholic mindset that is quite alien to the Episcopal Church's way of proceeding. For example, although the translation guidelines in effect in 1973, set forth in the Vatican document *Comme le prévoit*,¹² allowed for the composition of original texts in vernaculars—a permission ICEL seized—Wadsworth says that “it is important to note at this stage that there is no evidence here that the Bishops' Conferences, or even the individual Bishop-representatives on the Episcopal Board, were consulted before this decision was made.”¹³ Of course, those very bishops approved the 1973 ICEL Missal, including the original compositions, making Wadsworth's objection, even if true, ultimately meaningless.

His essay admits that *Liturgiam authenticam* and, consequently, the English translation of the third edition of the Missal, have stirred not insignificant tension and discord in the Roman Church. Yet, Wadsworth chides the critics of the new English translation, saying, for example, “opponents to *Liturgiam authenticam* in general¹⁴ and to the new translation of *The Roman Missal* in particular¹⁵ tend to be rather disingenuous.”¹⁶ Readers, therefore, should approach this volume knowing that, for all its useful information, it is not open to criticisms of the new English translation.

¹² Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Comme le prévoit*, January 25, 1969; <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/conslepr.htm>.

¹³ Andrew R. Wadsworth, “The Role of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy in Producing the Third Typical Edition of *The Roman Missal*,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 9.

¹⁴ A scorching, learned, and widely cited critique is: Peter Jeffery, *Translating Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam* (Collegetown, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005).

¹⁵ The published objections are countless. See, for example, John F. Baldwin, “Translating the Liturgy,” *America*, September 25, 2006; <http://americamagazine.org/issue/584/other-things/translating-liturgy>.

¹⁶ Wadsworth, “The Role of the International Commission,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 14.

Wadsworth puts forward the unsubstantiated “Trojan horse” theory. He contends, “Their clearest motivation would seem to be to scupper the use of formal equivalence for reasons of an ecclesiological rather than a liturgical or linguistic nature. . . . This sort of congregationalism militates against any sense of common identity for the Roman Rite.”¹⁷ Wadsworth offers no proof, however, that the critics of the new translation intend any such thing.

Most puzzling is his demand that “we need to rid ourselves of the idea that the sole purpose of language is communication of information.”¹⁸ None of the ICEL translators—not even the earliest ones—would have suggested that the “sole purpose” of liturgical texts is to convey information. Intelligibility (especially in oral performance) was a key value for ICEL, not information transfer.

Anthony Sherman gives a more even-handed treatment of the process leading to the new translation, avoiding comparisons with what came before. He helpfully sets the translation process out in clear order.¹⁹ Sherman describes the iterative process by which the Missal moved from translation by the newly-constituted ICEL, through reviews by the bishops’ conferences of the English-speaking nations, to final approval (or *recognitio*) by the Vatican’s CDWDS. He further describes the processes by which the Missal was introduced into use in the United States.

Sherman’s essay provides the rationale for the rest of the volume, describing the educational, catechetical program that the CDWDS knew would be essential if the new translation were to be understood and embraced by English-speaking Roman Catholics. That is what this book essentially is: a catechetical document.

Some of the essays, like Tuzik’s own piece on the increased biblical allusions in the new translation and its stronger emphasis on “patristic teaching,” give concrete examples of how the new directives informed the translators in very specific ways.²⁰ Most of the essays, however, are

¹⁷ Wadsworth, “The Role of the International Commission,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 14.

¹⁸ Wadsworth, “The Role of the International Commission,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 19.

¹⁹ Anthony F. Sherman, “The United States Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship and the Reception of the New Translation of *The Roman Missal*,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 23–42.

²⁰ Robert L. Tuzik, “Biblical and Patristic References in the Third Typical Edition of *The Roman Missal*,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 43–62.

more pastoral in nature than instructional, aiming, it would seem, to prepare the church for a significant shift. Paul Turner's chapter, "The Order of Mass: Comforting Words," needs no justification for Episcopalians who find the steady rhythms and the familiar and repeating texts of the liturgy to be "comfortable words."²¹ Similarly, Ronald Lewinski's treatment of "Initiation Texts in *The Roman Missal*," while at times bogging down in details, has a noble pastoral aim: "The third edition of *The Roman Missal* offers us a rich fare of initiation texts that can inspire catechesis and preaching."²² As one would expect, Lewinski, a Roman priest long renowned for his pastoral scholarship, is able to find value in the new texts without criticizing or denigrating what they replaced.

The entire volume, however, is not so pastorally engaging. One chapter is little more than a list of the numerous Marian texts in the new Missal: results, not of the translation, but of additions made to the *editio typica*.²³ The author provides a commentary on some of the Marian collects, but the chapter is uninspired.

The most unsettling chapter in this book, in part because it is so defensive and draws so many unsupported conclusions, is James Moroney's commentary on "The Four Eucharistic Prayers."²⁴ For example, Moroney writes, "The declaration 'The mystery of faith' is in response to the consecration that has just been accomplished."²⁵ While the Roman Church understands the Institution Narrative as a consecratory formula, the logic of the Eucharistic Prayer makes the memorial acclamation (now called "The Mystery of Faith") a response, not to the consecration, but to Christ's command to do this *in remembrance of him*.

This is entirely clear in the 1979 BCP's Eucharistic Prayer B, although it is true of all the Eucharistic Prayers of both churches. The Institution Narrative ends with the Lord's command that we celebrate

²¹ Paul Turner, "The Order of Mass: Comforting Words," in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 63–76.

²² Ronald J. Lewinski, "Initiation Texts in *The Roman Missal*," in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 127–141.

²³ James Presta, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Third Typical Edition of *The Roman Missal*," in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 143–160.

²⁴ James P. Moroney, "The Four Eucharistic Prayers of *The Roman Missal*," in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 77–96.

²⁵ Moroney, "The Four Eucharistic Prayers," in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 81.

the eucharist *in memory* of him. The presider, addressing the Father, continues, “Therefore, *according to his command*, O Father,” and the entire assembly asserts that, in its eucharistic action, it is doing what Jesus commanded: remembering his death and resurrection and, prophetically, his glorious return. In Moroney’s essay, it seems that Roman doctrine prompts an eisegesis rather than an exegesis of the text.

Not just in Moroney’s chapter but in the Missal itself, this dynamic is hard to ignore. The most transparent mistranslation of a text for the sake of upholding Roman practice is the phrase rendered in 1979 BCP’s Eucharistic Prayer B, “You have delivered us from evil and made us worthy to stand before you.”²⁶ Note the verb used here: “to stand.” A rubric in the *Roman Missal* directs the people to kneel, not stand, during the Eucharistic Prayer.²⁷ Moroney writes, “In the light of significant pastoral objections to a too literal translation of *dignos habuisti astare coram* leading to an exclusion of those who may be kneeling at this point in the Mass, the phrase has been rendered as ‘held us worthy / to be in your presence and minister to you.’”²⁸ It is remarkable that Moroney defends this rewriting of the text despite *Liturgiam authenticam*’s demand for formal equivalence, especially since just ten pages earlier he justified the use of the word “chalice” rather than “cup” despite its oddity in contemporary English speech because it is (in his view) what the Latin text says. The Roman Church has every right, of course, to translate its texts as it wills. This author, however, fails to admit inconsistencies in the church’s *modus operandi*. Reasons more unseemly than pastoral sensitivity (clericalism, for example) may have inspired the obscuring of the text’s clear assumption that all the baptized, not only the clergy, have been made worthy, by grace, to stand before God.

Even when he notes problems—not just inconsistencies—in the new English translation, he defends them. In the new translation of the Roman Canon, there is the confounding claim that “we offer you this sacrifice of praise / or they offer it for themselves / and all who are

²⁶ *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal, 1979), 368.

²⁷ See “General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” §43: “In the dioceses of the United States of America, they should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the *Sanctus*.”

²⁸ Moroney, “The Four Eucharistic Prayers,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 90.

dear to them.”²⁹ Moroney calls this “awkward,” but excuses it because it is a ninth-century interpolation. An awkward phrase that is not even part of the original text and must be explained away, one would think, should simply be omitted. This essay, however, does not allow that the new translation could have flaws.

Tuzik’s book, then, is not a dispassionate scholarly look at the English translation of the third *editio typica* of the *Roman Missal*, nor does it claim to be, and in what it apparently aims to do, it is very successful. Some chapters and sections are more successful than others, but given its never explicit but entirely evident purpose, it is useful. It familiarizes those who will use the Missal with a coherent history of its production, and it works to make the new translation, not just palatable, but even attractive.

What, though, of the translation itself, upon which Tuzik’s volume comments?

A great many of the texts in the new Missal and its previous editions are also in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It is commonly said that Cranmer relied heavily upon the “Sarum Rite,” but there was no Sarum *Rite*: no Sarum (that is, Salisbury) liturgical tradition standing on its own. There was a Sarum *Usage* or a Sarum *Use* of the Roman Rite, shaped and augmented according to the culture of southern England. It is not surprising, then, that the 1979 BCP, as well as its antecedents, share a great deal of material with the various editions of the Roman Rite. A comparison of how the BCP translates one text, how the 1973 ICEL edition of the Missal translates it, how the 1998 edition (never promulgated) proposed to translate it, and how the 2011 edition translates it, is illuminating.

Used three times in the 1979 Prayer Book, therefore known to most Episcopalians, is the prayer “O God of unchangeable power.” The BCP puts it at the end of the Litany for Ordinations and the Solemn Collects on Good Friday, as well as after the final lesson at the Great Vigil, the only place it also appears in the *Roman Missal*. The Latin text in all three editions of the current *Roman Missal* is:

Deus, incommutabilis virtus et lumen aeternum,
respice propitius ad totius Ecclesiae sacramentum,
et opus salutis humanae perpetuae dispositionis effectum

²⁹ Moroney, “The Four Eucharistic Prayers,” in Tuzik, ed., *Lift Up Your Hearts*, 84.

tranquillius operare;
 totusque mundus experiatur et videat
 deiecta erigi, inveterata renovari
 et per ipsum Christum redire omnia in integrum,
 a quo sumpserunt principium, Qui vivit, etc.

This text comes from the Gelasian Sacramentary.³⁰ In the extant manuscripts of both the Old Gelasian³¹ and the later eighth-century Gelasian Sacramentaries,³² the church is described as *mirabile sacramentum*. All the editions of the current *Roman Missal* omit the adjective *mirabile* from the second sense line. Similarly, in the sixth sense line the *Roman Missal* has *renovari*, while the Gelasian manuscripts have *novari*. (These alterations seem to have been made in the 1970 edition of the current Roman Missal, and for no apparent reason.)³³ An English translation of this prayer entered the BCP tradition in 1912 in the Scottish Church's "Additional Prayers." Both there and in the 1979 BCP, the translation includes an English equivalent of the word *mirabile* and, instead of *renovari*, translates *novari*. In other words, both Prayer Books, unlike the Roman Missal, follow the Gelasian originals.

The 1973 ICEL translation was:

³⁰ Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, 236.

³¹ Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, *Liber sacramentorum romanae ecclesiae ordinis anni circuli* (Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 316 / Paris Bibl. Nat. 7193, 41/56), *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta Series Maior Fontes* 4 (Roma: Herder, 1960), 70, 11. 13–19 (n. 432).

³² For an example of the text as it appeared in the eighth-century Gelasians, see André Dumas, ed., *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* CLIX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), 96 (n. 682). Other extant sources are listed in Hermanus A.P. Schmidt, ed., *Hebdomada Sancta, volumen alterum, fontes historici, commentarius historicus* (Rome: Herder, 1957), 828 (Conspectus XIV A, 5).

³³ The 1570 Missal of the Council of Trent puts the collect after the second of the twelve Paschal Vigil readings. There it includes the words *mirabile*, and *renovari*. See: *Missale Romanum (Editio Princeps, 1570)*. *Monumenti Liturgica Concilii Tridentini* 2 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), 269. In the 1956 Roman restoration of the Holy Week rites, the number of lessons with their corresponding collects was reduced from twelve to four, and this collect disappeared. See: *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* (New York: Benziger, 1956), 116–120. The collect was restored in the Missal of Paul VI (1970) after the seventh (and final) Vigil lesson, but without the word *mirabile*, and with the word *renovari* in place of the Gelasian's *novari*. These changes may have been inadvertent, since they do not reflect the earliest sources or the most recent antecedents. They do not in any evident way improve the text.

God of unchanging power and light,
 look with mercy and favor on your entire Church.
 Bring lasting salvation to mankind,
 so that the world may see
 the fallen lifted up,
 the old made new,
 and all things brought to perfection
 through him who is their origin,
 our Lord Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

The translation omits many of the words in the Latin and transforms a series of related clauses into two seemingly unrelated sentences. The Latin original speaks of God's power as unchanging but of God's light as eternal. The ICEL text applies "unchanging" to both. The phrase "eternal light" is such a part of the Christian vocabulary that something of the evocative power of the text is lost by the omission of the word "eternal." Perhaps no *meaning* has been lost since what is unchanging is thereby eternal, and all things eternal are necessarily unchanging (*pace* process theologians!), but the omission has an impact on the tone. Oddly, the next English phrase asks God to look with both mercy and favor on the church, although the Latin has only one word, *propitius*. The adjective can be translated as merciful or favorable. By including both possibilities, ICEL created a doublet where there was none.

The translation fails to call the church a sign, symbol, or "mystery," even though the Latin text speaks of the *sacramentum* of the church. With the important twentieth-century retrieval of the notion of the church as sacrament, particularly in the work of Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner, this is a puzzling omission. Very unfortunate was the choice of the almost immediately outdated term "mankind," where the Gelasian had "humanity" (*salutis humanae*).

The ICEL text alters the Gelasianum's logic and omits some of its central themes. It fails to say that the restoration of all things was God's plan from the beginning (*perpetuae dispositionis effectu*). It says only that the church hopes for it.

The structure of the translation changes the intent of the Latin, which suggests no cause-and-effect between human salvation and the world experiencing the wonders of God. Yet this is implied in ICEL's "so that" even though the fifth sense line does not begin with *ut*.

The 1979 Prayer Book translation, by contrast to the 1973 ICEL version, stays much closer to the Gelasian Sacramentary.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

This is hardly a word-for-word translation. It does not say, for example, that salvation was always God's plan. It implies it, however, when it says that the plan is a working out of divine providence. God fore-saw it: *providere*. In general, though, the Prayer Book language stays very close to the original text, even asking God to work "in tranquility," a direct translation of *tranquillius*.

ICEL's 1998 proposed English translation offered this.

God of power and unwavering light,
look with mercy on your great sacrament, the Church,
and bring to fulfillment
your eternal plan of redemption.
Then may the whole world see and know
that the fallen has been raised again,
that the old has been shaped anew,
and that all has been restored to wholeness
through Christ himself,
the beginning and end of all things,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

It is hard to see what is gained by straying so far from the original text. Why, for example, is "unwavering" a better "dynamic equivalent" of *aeternum* than "eternal," the direct translation in the BCP? The use of the past tense to describe God's action—"has been raised up," "has been shaped anew"—significantly changes the vision of the Latin text, which sees God's action as ongoing or in process.

The 2011 translation of the third *editio typica*, adhering to the principles in *Liturgiam authenticam*, stays very close to the Latin.

O God of unchanging power and eternal light,
 look with favor on the wondrous mystery of the whole Church
 and serenely accomplish the work of human salvation,
 which you planned from all eternity;
 may the whole world know and see
 that what was cast down is raised up,
 what had become old is made new,
 and all things are restored to integrity through Christ,
 just as by him they came into being.
 Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

This translation accounts for every Latin word (although, like the other translations, it does not capture accurately the first line, which places the nouns, power and light, in apposition to God: “O God, unchangeable power and eternal light . . .”). Remarkably, it describes the church as a *wondrous* (*mirabile*) mystery even though the word *mirabile* is not in the Latin from which the translation was made. Could this be inadvertent bleed from the BCP?

In this and in other ways, the translation does not capture what the base text says, and it is not consistently euphonious. The normal cadences of English speech are abandoned in favor of a somewhat stilted, almost scientific prose. For example, the BCP phrase “your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery” captures in a far more accurate and pleasing way what the new English translation renders as “the wondrous mystery of the whole Church.” The text asks God to look upon the mystery, when the Latin text clearly means for God to look on the church, which *is* a mystery. It is unclear what God is, in fact, being asked to regard. Similarly difficult to parse is the phrase “restored to integrity through Christ.”

This sort of unintelligibility, more even than the wooden tone of a great deal of the new English translation, draws fire. Rita Ferrone, a vocal critic of the new translation, points out this puzzling sentence:

For when your children were scattered afar by sin,
 through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit,
 you gathered them again to yourself,

that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity,
made the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit,
might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom,
be manifest as the Church.³⁴

This very long sentence is difficult to decipher on paper. How much more difficult it would be to understand it if it were read aloud! It gives the impression that through the Blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, God's children were scattered. The idea that the unity of the Trinity creates the unity of the church is complex in itself, but it is nearly incomprehensible in the way this text expresses it; and no contemporary English speaker would say, "to the praise of your manifold wisdom." Perhaps the greatest problem is that the subject of the sentence is entirely unclear. What exactly might "be manifest as the Church"? "The people" seems the only option, but it is hard to see what that means. Pity the poor priest who must pray this aloud, and pity the others celebrating the eucharist with him, who are being asked to embrace an idea that is not merely unclear but is even incomprehensible. Examples of such perplexing and infelicitous translations are legion in the new Missal.

In the end, all the English translations of the *Roman Missal*—1973, 1998, 2011—fall short. The most recent version, however, is unlikely to be abandoned soon, if only because the cost of producing the liturgical books and commissioning music for the new texts was staggering. The greatest irony is that the Roman Church could have learned a great deal from Thomas Cranmer about translating Latin texts, as the Scots did in 1912 when they brought the Latin collect, *Deus incommutabilis*, into the BCP tradition. Anglican renderings of that collect and of many other Latin texts are faithful, euphonious, and comprehensible: three of the key principles of *Liturgiam authenticam*.

The proposal to use the BCP as the model for translating Latin texts into English for Roman Catholics is nothing new. When a vernacular Roman liturgy was only a dream, some members of that church proposed taking the Prayer Book as their model. Irwin Tucker, an early activist for the translation of the Roman liturgy, wrote:

³⁴ Preface VIII of the Sundays in Ordinary Time, *The Roman Missal* (2011), 586. See Rita Ferone, "It Doesn't Sing: The Trouble with the New Roman Missal," *Commonweal*, June 30, 2011; <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/it-doesn't-sing>.

The original English liturgy [the BCP] was made up chiefly of direct translations from Latin, condensing into one handy volume the Missal, Breviary, Manual, Pontifical, and Ritual. Scholars of English literature universally express admiration for the excellence of its literary forms. Liturgists emphasize the powerful, effective simplicity of its dignified yet appealing rites. It affords a first-class example of what can be done in building a People's liturgy, in which there is full, intelligent, popular participation.³⁵

Tucker's advice, if it had been heeded, would not only have saved the Roman Church incalculable time, rancor, and expense, but also would have led to a far better liturgical text for English-speaking Roman Catholics.³⁶

³⁵ Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence*, 152–153.

³⁶ *Liturgiam authenticam* 40, however, explicitly forbids incorporating any translation that sounds like it comes from another Christian denomination. This would include ICET texts and material from the BCP (except, oddly, the BCP translation of the Lord's Prayer, without the doxology).



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